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ABSTRACT

Current research suggests that culture strongly influences students' learning patterns, communication styles, perceptions, and behavior. This research summary details ways that teachers can improve student learning by becoming aware of cultural differences and employing culturally sensitive instructional methods. Concentrating on how students learn and how teachers teach, the document describes instructional techniques that incorporate cultural awareness, maintain standards of excellence, avoid racial stereotypes, and foster high expectations for students of all ethnic backgrounds in today's schools and classrooms. Seven main sections address the following topics: (1) understanding culture; (2) culture and learning elaborating on early learning experiences and cultural discontinuity; (3) culture conflicts in schooling outlining learning expectations and grouping, areas of culture conflict, and teachers and culture conflict; (4) culturally sensitive instruction; (5) profiles of the Kamehameha Early Education Project and other projects; (6) implementation of culturally sensitive instruction including communication strategies, cooperative learning, whole language strategies, motivation and classroom management, matching cultural cognitive styles, and using community related themes in instruction; and (7) cautions and considerations including local culture variations, assumptions and stereotypes, balancing diversity and commonality, teaching heterogeneous groups, fears of separation and inequity, classroom climate, and accomplishing constructive change. Concluding remarks are given. (65 references) (RR)

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